

THE KENTUCKY LONG-TERM POLICY RESEARCH CENTER'S POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION STUDY

**Agenda Item I
February 4, 2001**

In calendar year 2000, the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center approved a research agenda that included a major study of postsecondary education. The board, at its January 11, 2001, meeting, reauthorized this study as a central feature of its calendar year 2001 research agenda.

Three members of the center's staff, accompanied by two institutional researchers, will make a series of presentations on key aspects of the center's research in this area.

Staff from the center includes Michael Childress, executive director; Michal Smith-Mello, senior policy analyst; and Amy Watts, policy analyst. Also in attendance will be Skip Kifer, professor, from the Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation Department at the University of Kentucky's College of Education; and Steve Clements, assistant professor, also from the Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation Department of the University of Kentucky's College of Education.

The presentation will include three major segments.

- **Case Studies of Selected Kentucky High Schools: Understanding Variations in Postsecondary Outcomes**

Michael Childress will discuss the method of selecting and examining the high schools and the variables that best explain variations in postsecondary transition rates among Kentucky high schools. Michal Smith-Mello will discuss findings from four case studies of high schools in Kentucky that sought to determine what factors appear to most influence postsecondary choices. Michal Smith-Mello also will discuss some preliminary findings from the center's examination of teachers' transcripts from selected schools.

- **Kentucky's Social Returns on Investments in Higher Education: A Benefit-Cost Analysis**

Amy Watts will discuss preliminary results from an analysis of the social benefits of postsecondary education. Using a combination of Kentucky and national level data, her models will help illustrate the association between education changes and behavioral changes that benefit society as a whole, including better health outcomes and lower reliance on public programs. Her discussion will include a comparison of the value of these benefits and the state's public investment in higher education.

- **The Kentucky High School Survey: An Examination of Attitudes, Perceptions, and Intentions**

Skip Kifer and Steve Clements will present selected results of their analysis of the Kentucky High School Survey. Approximately 1,000 Kentucky high school-age youths were asked questions about their life experiences and their perceptions of a number of educational issues.

Staff Preparation by Ron Carson